

# **Committee on International Relations**

## **Subcommittee on Europe and Emerging Threats**

### **Statement of Chairman Elton Gallegly**

#### **Germany After the Election: Implications for Germany, Europe and U.S. – German Relations**

November 9, 2005

Today, the Subcommittee on Europe and Emerging Threats is holding a hearing on the results of the recent German federal election of September 18, 2005.

Now, before I go any further, perhaps I should clarify the meaning of the word “results”. Fifty two days after the election, Germany still does not have a new coalition government. The two major parties (the CDU/CSU and the SPD) have been engaged in an intense process of negotiations to establish a so-called “Grand Coalition”. As of this week, it looks like they are on track to finalize a coalition agreement, and establish a new coalition government in the next two weeks, perhaps by November 22<sup>nd</sup>, if all goes well.

There still could be some surprises along the way. But, it seems that we now have enough clarity to hold this hearing today. The purpose of this hearing is to assess what the German electorate decided almost eight weeks ago, and the resulting coalition government which is emerging. We would like to consider the implications of this election for Germany, and particularly Germany’s prospects for economic reform. We would also like to assess the implications of this election for Germany’s role in Europe and Germany’s foreign policy, and especially the consequences for U.S. – German relations.

One further comment on the status of the election “results”. The Subcommittee invited Ambassador Wolfgang Ischinger, the German Ambassador to the United States, to participate as a witness in this hearing

and provide testimony. However, due to the sensitivity of the ongoing coalition negotiations, and the lack of finality, the Ambassador had to decline. We appreciate his consideration, and we thank him for his willingness to help the Subcommittee in any way.

One final thought. As fate would have it, today is November 9<sup>th</sup>, 2005. Sixteen years ago, on November 9<sup>th</sup>, 1989, the Berlin Wall fell. It is hard to believe that sixteen years could go by so fast, and it is almost hard to imagine how momentous this event was for Germany, for Europe, and for the world.

Germany has achieved much since 1989. And the results of the 2005 election testify to those achievements, and to what the people of Germany still would like to achieve. We are here to consider all of these results and all of these implications, and the consequences for U.S. – German relations, and the important relationship between the people of Germany and the people of the United States.

It is also my hope that we will explore specific issues, such as the impact of the election on Turkey's relationship with Europe and potential accession into the European Union, the role Germany will be playing in Afghanistan and Iraq, your assessments of German public opinion toward the United States, and the challenges for U.S. public diplomacy in Germany and Europe.

I look forward to hearing from our three expert witnesses, and I will now turn to Mr. Wexler for any remarks he may wish to make.